Getting ready for the big fry in Cajun country

By Edvins Beiltiks
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

BASILE, La. — The band at Fontenot's Main Street Lounge started in on "Chere Te Mon," the fiddle player stepping up to sing. The accordion player leaned back to holler and grin.

Watching the couples clutch and spin across the floor, Bruce LeJeune said, "You ought to be here on a Saturday night. This whole building shakes, just like you had that earthquake in Frisco."

LeJeune, 48, who's lived in Basile all his life, said the town is right in the heart of Louisiana's Cajun country—a triangle roughly described by Lake Charles in the southwest, Alexandria to the north and Houma to the south.

Descendants of the Acadian French who came to southern Louisiana from Canada two centuries ago, the Cajuns have kept their own language, music and culture alive over the years.

"You want to know the Cajun attitude?" asked LeJeune. "Work like hell, enjoy life, have a good time with your friends and family, and go to church on Sunday.

"And friendly? You ain't never seen no friendlier people nowhere. You walk on this street here and fall down, somebody gonna pick you up."

LeJeune nodded and turned back to the band, which was just whipping into "Jole Blonde." As the

— Please see CAJUN, A-15